

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 and 2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein said side shift frame has a rectangular shape.

4. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein each of said fork shoes defines a bottom edge, wherein at least a portion of said bottom edge of each of said fork shoes engages said sliding surface.

5. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein said frame support member comprises an upper contact surface and said upper cross member comprises a lower contact surface, wherein said upper contact surface of said frame support member has a generally convex shape and said lower contact surface of said upper cross member has a generally concave shape, wherein said upper contact surface is slidably received within said lower contact surface.

6. (Original) The assembly of claim 5, wherein said upper cross member defines a planar portion overhanging a front side of said frame support member.

7. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein said side shift frame defines a planar front face, wherein said fork contact surface of said fork shoes is coplanar with said planar front face of said frame.

8. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein said shift means comprises a first piston and second piston, each of said pistons abutting against said side shift frame, said frame support member defining a first cavity and a second cavity, said first piston being slidably received in said first cavity and said second piston being slidably received in said second cavity, said first and second cavities being in fluid communication with a supply of hydraulic fluid, said first piston being adapted to slide said frame in one direction upon receiving an inflow of hydraulic fluid in said first cavity, and said second piston being adapted to slide the frame in an opposite direction upon receiving an inflow of hydraulic fluid in said second cavity.

9. (Original) The assembly of claim 8, wherein each of said pistons is sealed against each of said cavities by a gland nut.

10. (Original) The assembly of claim 8, further comprising first and second contact pads secured to said side shift frame, wherein said first piston abuts against said first contact pad and said second piston abuts against said second contact pad.

11. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein the fork positioner comprises:

a) a hydraulic cylinder connected to said side shift frame, said hydraulic cylinder defining first and second cylinder ports communicating with a supply of hydraulic fluid; and

b) a rod received in said hydraulic cylinder, said rod being adapted for reciprocating movement in said hydraulic cylinder, said rod having a free end secured to said first fork shoe, said rod being adapted to move said first fork shoe away from said hydraulic cylinder upon hydraulic fluid entering said first cylinder port, and move said first fork shoe toward said hydraulic cylinder upon hydraulic fluid entering said second cylinder port; and

c) a centering assembly adapted to move said second fork shoe upon movement of said first fork shoe, wherein said first and second fork shoes are maintained at an equal distance from the center of said side shift frame.

12. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 11, wherein said centering assembly comprises a chain loop movably connected to said side shift frame, said first and second fork shoes being secured to said chain loop, wherein movement of said first fork shoe actuated by said rod moves said chain loop, thereby moving said second fork shoe equidistantly.

13. (Original) The assembly of claim 12, wherein said chain loop comprises an upper chain connected to a lower chain.

14. (Currently amended) A side shift assembly for a lift truck having a mast and a pair of forks, said assembly comprising:

a) a carriage comprising a pair of horizontally spaced apart vertical members and a frame support member secured transversely to said vertical members, said vertical members being adapted to be movably secured within said mast, said frame support member defining a front face and an upper contact surface;

b) a side shift frame, said side shift frame comprising an upper cross member adapted to support said forks; and

c) a side shift operator means for movement of said side shift frame along said frame support member, wherein said side shift operator means is slidingly received in a portion of said frame support member;

wherein said upper cross member defines:

i) a planar front portion positioned directly in front of said side shift operator means, between said side shift operator means and the forks, to protect the side shift operator means, and

ii) a lower contact surface adapted to engage said upper contact surface of said frame support member for sliding movement thereon.

15. (Original) The assembly of claim 14, wherein said upper contact surface has a convex shape and said lower contact surface has a concave shape, said upper contact surface being slidably received in said lower contact surface.

16. (Original) The assembly of claim 15, wherein said side shift frame further comprises a lower cross member spaced apart from said upper cross member, said upper and lower cross members being substantially parallel, said upper and lower cross members being connected by spaced apart first and second side members to form a quadrilateral shape.

17. (Original) The assembly of claim 16, wherein said side shift frame has a rectangular shape.

18. (Original) The assembly of claim 16, wherein the shift means comprises a first piston and second piston, each of said pistons abutting against said side shift frame, said first piston being slidably received in a first cavity defined in said frame support member, said second piston being slidably received in a second cavity defined in said frame support member, said first and second cavities being in fluid communication with a supply of hydraulic fluid, said first piston being adapted to slide said frame in one direction upon receiving an inflow of hydraulic fluid in said first cavity, and said second piston being adapted to slide the side shift frame in an opposite direction upon receiving an inflow of hydraulic fluid in said second cavity.

19. (Original) The assembly of claim 18, wherein each of said pistons is sealed against each of said cavities by a gland nut.

20. (Original) The assembly of claim 18, further comprising first and second contact pads secured to said upper cross member, wherein said first piston abuts against said first contact pad and said second piston abuts against said second contact pad.

21. (Currently amended) A fork movement assembly for a lift truck having a mast and a pair of forks, each of said pair of forks having a hook portion located on a shank portion thereof, said assembly comprising:

a) a carriage comprising a pair of horizontally spaced apart vertical members and a frame support member secured transversely to said vertical members, said vertical members being adapted to be movably secured within said mast;

b) a side shift frame comprising an upper cross member, a spaced apart lower cross member, and two side members connecting a first and a second end of said upper cross member to corresponding first and second ends of said lower cross member, said upper cross member being slidably connected to said frame support member, said upper cross member being adapted to support said forks along said hook portion, said lower cross member defining a sliding surface;

c) a shift means for movement of said side shift frame along said frame support member, said shift means being located in a portion of said frame support member;

d) a first fork shoe and a second fork shoe adapted to slide horizontally on said sliding surface, each of said fork shoes defining a fork contact surface adapted to engage said shank portion, said fork contact surface being located no further forward than a front face of said upper cross member; and

e) a fork positioner adapted to move said first fork shoe relative to said second fork shoe, said fork positioner being operatively connected to said fork shoes, wherein said fork positioner is adapted to move said first fork shoe to and between a center of said side shift frame and one of said side members.

22. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 21, wherein said fork positioner is adapted to move said second fork shoe to and between the center of said side shift frame and the other one of said side members.

23. (Previously presented) A fork movement assembly for a lift truck having a mast and a pair of forks, each of said pair of forks having a hook portion located on a shank portion thereof, said assembly comprising:

a carriage comprising a pair of horizontally spaced apart vertical members and a frame support member secured transversely to said vertical members, said vertical members being adapted to be movably secured within said mast;

a side shift frame comprising an upper cross member, a spaced apart lower cross member, and two side members connecting said upper cross member to said lower cross member, said upper cross member being slidably connected to said frame support member, said upper cross member being adapted to support said forks along said hook portion, said lower cross member defining a sliding surface;

a shift means for movement of said side shift frame along said frame support member, said shift means being located in a portion of said frame support member;

a first fork shoe and a second fork shoe adapted to slide horizontally on said sliding surface, each of said fork shoes defining a fork contact surface adapted to engage said shank portion, said fork contact surface being located no further forward than a front face of said upper cross member; and

a fork positioner adapted to move said first fork shoe relative to said second fork shoe, said fork positioner being operatively connected to said first and second fork shoes, wherein said fork positioner is adapted to move a first fork shoe to and between a center of said side shift frame and a longitudinal end of said upper cross member of said side shift frame.

24. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 23, wherein said fork positioner is adapted to move said second fork shoe to and between the center of said

side shift frame and the other longitudinal end of said upper cross member of said side shift frame.

25. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 24, wherein said fork positioner comprises:

a hydraulic cylinder connected to said side shift frame, said hydraulic cylinder defining first and second cylinder ports communicating with a supply of hydraulic fluid; and

a rod received in said hydraulic cylinder, said rod being adapted for reciprocating movement in said hydraulic cylinder, said rod having a free end secured to said first fork shoe, said rod being adapted to move said first fork shoe away from said hydraulic cylinder upon hydraulic fluid entering said first cylinder port, and move said first fork shoe toward said hydraulic cylinder upon hydraulic fluid entering said second cylinder port; and

a centering assembly adapted to move said second fork shoe upon movement of said first fork shoe, wherein said first and second fork shoes are maintained at an equal distance from the center of said side shift frame.

26. (Previously presented) The assembly of claim 25, wherein said centering assembly comprises a chain loop movably connected to said side shift frame, said first and second fork shoes being secured to said chain loop, wherein movement of said first fork shoe actuated by said rod moves said chain loop, thereby moving said second fork shoe equidistantly.